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**Enjoy Your Memorial Day Weekend - Barbeque Safely**

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan would like to remind everyone to grill safely this weekend as they commemorate Memorial Day. "Outdoor cooking incidents, such as gas grill fires, burns from flare-ups and improper use of charcoal lighter fluid, increase as people take to their backyards to enjoy a barbeque," said Coan. Almost three-quarters (72%) of all gas grill fires occur between May and September.

State Fire Marshal Coan said, "Too often people think fire won't happen to them and they fail to use safe procedures when lighting the grill." Make sure that there are no leaks in the propane hose and regulator before lighting the grill. When lighting a charcoal grill remember that additional lighter fluid should never be squirted onto the coals after they have been lit. Use fireplace matches or a grill lighter to stay at arms length from flames.

In 2004, there were 36 grill fires reported to the Massachusetts Fire Incident Reporting System (MFIRS) by local fire departments in Massachusetts. However, this seemingly small number of fires resulted in property losses of \$157,000. In addition, 4 civilians suffered burns while cooking or lighting grills.

Keep your property and your neighbor's safe. A gas grill fire can extend to the house, a porch or deck. Place your grill at least 6 feet from your home. Gas grills should not be used above ground level or beneath decks and porches. Gas and charcoal grills produce carbon monoxide and should not be used indoors.